

# **Federal Welfare-to-Work Hiring Progress**

## **AGENCY KEYS TO SUCCESS**

A Report to  
President Bill Clinton  
by  
Vice President Al Gore

April 1998

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Last year I asked Vice President Gore to lead the Federal Welfare-to-Work Hiring Initiative. We agreed that it was important for the federal government to do its fair share to employ welfare recipients, and we set a goal of 10,000 hires by 2000. Today, the Vice President shared with me each agency's first year accomplishments.

The results are impressive – over 3,600 new workers have moved from welfare to productive federal employment. I want to thank the Vice President, cabinet members and every federal employee who has contributed to the success of this initiative. But most of all, I want to thank those we have hired for their hard work and dedication. You have proved that welfare-to-work makes sense for families and employers. As we move into the second year of our hiring efforts, I have asked the Vice President to keep me informed of your progress. Keep up the good work!

*Bill Clinton*



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Mr. President:

On the first anniversary of your challenge to the federal government to hire welfare recipients, I can report good news. Your team has hired more than 3,600 former recipients. We are well on our way to your goal of hiring 10,000 individuals by the year 2000.

When we began this effort, some federal managers told me they were skeptical about our chances for success. They noted that we had just been through the largest downsizing in the history of our government and wondered how receptive workers would be to this initiative. They expressed concern about the skills and attitudes that former recipients would bring to the workplace.

But one year later, the skepticism has been replaced by enthusiasm. As Secretary Cuomo puts it, "new hires are excited, energetic, willing to work and anxious to learn." Supervisors and employees government-wide are discovering marked improvements in morale and productivity in offices that have hired former recipients. Why? The skills and enthusiasm that new workers bring to the workplace have created a new enthusiasm in other employees.

The success of the hiring effort also is due to the personal commitment of federal employees involved in recruiting, mentoring and training. In St. Louis, Janey DeSmedt volunteered to handle the program for the Department of Agriculture. Through local community organizations, she identified 10 promising welfare recipients. After four years of training, these employees

will become loan processors. It was her individual dedication that changed the lives of 10 families.

Her story is a common one at all levels. Larry Goodwin, a senior executive at the Labor Department in Washington, D.C., offered to chair an interagency group that now solves D.C.-wide problems; and Janice Lachance, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, has worked tirelessly to mobilize human resource managers throughout government. This program is proving that welfare-to-work makes a difference for all involved.

Beverly Kipe, who was hired by the Energy Department six years ago, offers a goal for our recent hires. She says, "For years, I was embarrassed for anyone to know I had been on welfare. When I see that I am now paying three and a half times the amount of my welfare check in taxes, I realize how far I've come. I am grateful for what I have received, and I want to give back to my community. I serve on the boards of the Washington County, Maryland, Community Action Council and the Washington County Department of Social Services."

Each agency has outlined its Welfare-to-Work program accomplishments in its annual report. These reports show that agency heads are working hard to solve many of the same problems that face employers throughout America – transportation and affordable child care. They also report that good solutions are community-based and individually inspired, and are only possible because of partnerships with other federal, state and local agencies as well as nonprofit organizations and the private sector. As we move into a new year, our emphasis is on retaining new workers, leveraging our commitment among federal contractors and involving more local communities in this critical national initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Al Gore", with a stylized, flowing script.

Al Gore

# LEADERSHIP KEYS



*Janice Lachance, Director, Office of Personnel Management, meeting with a class of worker trainees*

## **Communicate the vision and reason for the hiring initiative**

Secretary Slater at Transportation says DOT is the **to** in Welfare-to-Work, and everyone at the Department is aware of his personal commitment. Other cabinet members – including the Secretaries of Labor, Veterans Affairs, Energy, and Health and Human Services – have successfully used e-mail messages, staff meetings, newsletters, workshops, videoconferencing, satellite broadcasting and personal letters to convey their commitment and goals.

At the Department of Defense, Secretary Cohen encouraged service secretaries and agency heads to respond in creative ways – and they did, from developing training videotapes for base exchange managers to developing plans with Goodwill Industries to hire hundreds of recipients at base commissaries across the nation. Government-wide leadership encouragement translates to local hiring commitments.

## **Ask union partners and senior managers to help**

Health and Human Services operating divisions report on hiring at their monthly labor-management partnership council meetings. Attorney General Reno and Secretary Cuomo asked senior leaders to develop recruitment plans that demonstrated how new hires would be incorporated into program operations.

## Lead by example

The President, Secretary Shalala at Health and Human Services, Secretary Herman at Labor, Director Lachance at the Office of Personnel Management and Administrator Browner at the Environmental Protection Agency hired former welfare recipients in their own offices.

## Talk to those hired to see how the program is really working

Labor Secretary Herman and Office of Personnel Management Director Lachance meet with their agencies' new hires to get first-hand reports about how the program is working.

## Recognize and acknowledge those who are hired

Last October, the Vice President presented the Welfare-to-Work Working Group with his Hammer Award. Secretary Peña at Energy, Secretary Cuomo at Housing and Urban Development and Administrator Alvarez at the Small Business Administration have held recognition ceremonies for employees and successful programs.

## Plan for the future

Secretaries Rubin at Treasury, Herman at Labor and Riley at Education, and Administrator Alvarez at the Small Business Administration incorporated Welfare-to-Work goals into their strategic plans.



*Interagency Working Group receiving Vice President Gore's Hammer Award, October 1997*

# RECRUITMENT KEYS



*Barbara Blessing, INS, conducting new employee training for the Dallas-Fort Worth Federal Executive Board*

## Get to know the big picture in your community

Answer the questions: How many people need to find jobs? What assistance is available for transportation and child care? How can you best locate job-ready candidates? Participate in community initiatives to share resources and knowledge.

Under the direction of the Office of Personnel Management, federal executive boards and associations in over 100 cities – interagency groups of federal leaders – have led the hiring efforts in their communities. The efforts of the organizations in Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Dallas and Kansas City have been especially effective. These groups have held training sessions, identified recruitment sources and published local recruiting guides. Individual agencies have also reached out to community organizations. In St. Louis, for example, Agriculture partnered with the St. Louis Transitional Hope House, sponsored by the Red Cross, to get referrals for its Centralized Servicing Center jobs.



## Target recruitment

Get to know local social service providers and community organizations so they can refer job-ready candidates. Treasury echoed this theme throughout its agencies: ***establish a line of communication with your local service organizations***. The Executive Office of the President, the Defense Investigative Service and the United States Information Agency reported that local project coordinators willingly screened candidates to make sure they had the skills needed for specific jobs. Successful hiring initiatives at every agency reflect the importance of local partners.

## Look for ways to help in your community

Where Energy and Navy cannot hire, they provide work experience for welfare recipients in local job training programs. The National Institutes of Health offer half-day test-taking workshops for welfare recipients to prepare them for the federal government's clerical test. The Social Security Administration teaches job-seekers how to complete federal job applications.



*Eric Dodds, a GSA Welfare-to-Work liaison, and David J. Barram, GSA Administrator, greet Vice President Gore at October 1997 event*

# RETENTION KEYS

## Have training programs in place for new hires and supervisors

It's not necessary to reinvent the wheel; use already existing agency programs and consider using the Department of Labor training lessons available on its web site **[www.doleta.com](http://www.doleta.com)**. Veterans Affairs, a highly dispersed organization, offers training and information over its intranet system. "On-Site Training at the Workstation" at the Census Bureau furnishes a variety of lessons, provided by trainers, tailored to job needs. The Internal Revenue Service is using its 31 Performance Development Centers to assess individual skills and target training. Labor hosted training for new workers at Justice, the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Credit Union Administration. The State Department partnered with its contractors to train managers, worker trainees and mentors.



*Juana Pacheco at work at the Department of Labor*

## **Incorporate new hires into the workforce as quickly as possible**

The goal, as Secretary Shalala remarked, “is to make it impossible to tell the new workers from the other members of the federal family.” Rather than developing special retention programs, Health and Human Services uses its quality-of-life program to mainstream new hires.

## **Use peer and supervisory mentoring**

The Social Security Administration has developed a three-tiered mentoring model: ***supervisors*** – to help understand workplace rules and culture, ***technical assistants*** – to improve work skills and ***employee assistance program counselors*** – to provide one-on-one counseling and workshops on topics like single-parenting and financial and stress management. Interior’s three-pronged approach to retention focuses on orientation, self-development and quality-of-work life. The Patent Office signs up mentors for six months to ensure that good employee-mentor relationships are being developed.

## **Ask supervisors and new hires what they need to improve retention**

Veterans Affairs surveys field facilities to identify the additional tools needed to enhance training and mentoring programs.

## **Identify local resources that can help – don’t overlook resources like the employee assistance center and the credit union**

The Social Security Administration has made employee assistance counselors important retention resources. Veterans Affairs reports that its credit unions are

## RETENTION KEYS (continued)

assisting new hires with banking issues and helping them get bank accounts so they can be paid via direct deposit. Labor made special arrangements with credit unions to waive the deposit fee for new employees opening accounts. Energy and its Richland, Washington, partners operate a boutique, Success Suits You, which stocks donated professional clothing and accessories for new employees.

### Recognize success

The Executive Office of the President calls its program STARS – **S**upport, **T**raining **A**nd **R**ealizing **S**uccess. The positive message of the acronym reinforces the program goal to recognize exemplary actions by supporting and training new hires in workplace skills and attitudes. Last October, a United States Information Agency program participant joined the Vice President in an event commemorating the federal hiring of 2,000 welfare recipients. After only a few weeks on their jobs, delighted new workers at Labor and Agriculture earned On-the-Spot Awards for excellent work.



*STARS participants Jeannetta P. Allen, Laura L. Askew and Shanice C. Stokes*

# LEVERAGING KEYS

## Reach out to ALL your partners to encourage hiring

Education sent letters to contractor partners, grantees and associations encouraging them to participate in welfare-to-work hiring, mentoring and training. Social Security has asked its partner, the State Disability Determination Services, to hire; it has also reached out to its contractors and asked them to talk to their subcontractors. Energy Secretary Peña held personal meetings with the CEOs of major DOE facilities contractors to encourage hiring. Secretary Slater rallied the transportation industries to do their fair share in hiring welfare recipients in nontraditional jobs – for example, in the aviation industry, United, American Airlines and Cessna have hired and trained hundreds of welfare recipients. Defense Secretary Cohen wrote to the 100 largest defense contractors to encourage their support. The Office of Personnel Management issued over 370 letters to health insurance carriers, urging support of the Administration's program.

## Make information available globally

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration and Interior's Office of Acquisition put welfare-to-work information for contractors on their home pages on the World Wide Web.

## Sign pledges of commitment

Energy and Transportation have asked their contractors to sign a voluntary pledge of support to hire welfare recipients.

## Work with the media to promote the positive image of new hires

Those hired by the White House and the United States Information Agency have been featured on CNN, Fox, the *NBC Nightly News*, the *Los Angeles Times* and *Ebony Magazine*. Labor is working with the *Washington Post* to do a story that follows some of the new hires through their federal work experience.

# HIRING PROGRESS

as reported by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management

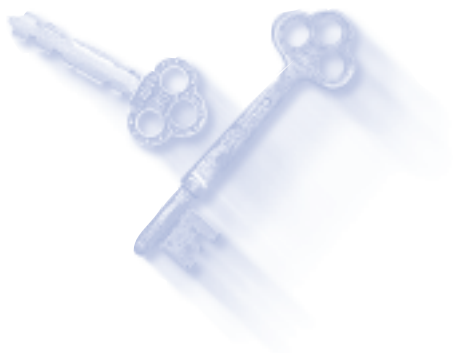
Agency	Total Commitment thru 2000	Hires Reported thru March 22	% of Total Year 2000 Commitment Hired since 3/8/97
Commodity Futures Trading Commission	–	2	–
Department of Agriculture	375	222	59%
Department of Commerce	4,180*	218	5%
Department of Defense	1,600	833	52%
Department of Education	21	10	48%
Department of Energy	55	28	51%
Department of Health & Human Services	300	175	58%
Department of Housing & Urban Development	200	58	29%
Department of the Interior	325	89	27%
Department of Justice	450	101	22%
Department of Labor	120	54	45%
Department of State	220	33	15%
Department of Transportation	400	134	34%
Department of the Treasury	405	493	122%
Department of Veterans Affairs	800	689	86%
Environmental Protection Agency	120	61	51%
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	–	9	–
Executive Office of the President	6	7	117%
Federal Emergency Management Agency	125	36	29%
General Services Administration	121	66	55%
National Aeronautics & Space Administration	40	8	20%
National Archives & Records Administration	–	20	–
National Credit Union Administration	–	4	–
National Labor Relations Board	–	1	–
Office of Personnel Management	25	37	148%
Railroad Retirement Board	–	1	–
Securities & Exchange Commission	10	6	60%
Small Business Administration	120	35	29%
Social Security Administration	600	224	37%
U.S. Information Agency	20	25	125%
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission	–	1	–
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,638</b>	<b>3,680</b>	<b>35%</b>

\*4,000 Census hires 1998-2000

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## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

- ✓ AGENCY FIRST YEAR FEDERAL HIRING REPORTS, QUARTERLY UPDATES AND MONTHLY STATISTICS ARE ON LINE AT **w2w.fed.gov**
- ✓ OVER 80% OF THE NEW WORKERS ARE OUTSIDE THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA
- ✓ CONTRACTORS AT TRANSPORTATION CAN EASILY REPORT NEW HIRES VIA DOT'S NEW WEB SITE (**[www.dot.gov/ost/m60/acqwelwork](http://www.dot.gov/ost/m60/acqwelwork)**) OR E-MAIL
- ✓ THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION'S TOLL-FREE NUMBER (**1-800-U-ASK-SBA**) LINKS BUSINESSES TO WELFARE RECIPIENTS LOOKING FOR WORK
- ✓ WITH LOCAL PASTORS AND PARISHIONERS HELPING CANDIDATES FILL OUT APPLICATIONS, THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY HIRED 27 NEW WORKERS – EXCEEDING ITS FIRST YEAR GOAL



Graphic design by Department of Energy



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**<http://w2w.fed.gov>**